

What is Claimed:

1 1. A system for providing audio and video information from a
2 second location to a first location and for controlling said audio and video
3 information from the first location, comprising

4 a computer, in the second location, including a data input port,
5 responsive to operational commands to controllably provide video information;

6 a television monitor, in the first location, coupled to the computer
7 for selectively displaying the provided video information;

8 a local keyboard, in the second location, for providing first ones of
9 the operational commands;

10 a remote control transmitter in the first location for communicating
11 command and control signals;

12 a remote control receiver, in the first location, for receiving and
13 decoding the command and control signals from the remote control transmitter
14 and providing second ones of the operational commands; and

15 an input select switch, in the second location, having first and
16 second input ports and a data output port, the first input port being coupled to
17 the remote control receiver, the second input port being coupled to the local
18 keyboard and the data output port being coupled to the data input port of the
19 computer to provide either the first ones of the operational commands or the
20 second ones of the operational commands to the data input port of the computer.

1 2. A system according to claim 1, wherein:

2 the computer includes a control input port, coupled to the input
3 select switch to receive a control request signal; and

4 the input select switch includes:

5 a communications port interface, coupled to the remote control
6 receiver for receiving the second ones of the operational commands and
7 for generating therefrom the control request signal and for receiving a
8 select signal and generating a selection signal to cause the input select
9 switch to provide either the first ones of the operational commands or the
10 second ones of the operational commands to the data input port of the
11 computer.

12 a control output port coupled to the provide the control request
13 signal to the control input port of the computer and to receive the select signal
14 from the computer.

1 3. A system according to claim 2, wherein the data input port
2 and the control input port are respectively different communications ports on the
3 computer, each selected from a group consisting of RS-232 ports, keyboard
4 input ports, small computer systems interface (SCSI) ports, universal serial bus
5 (USB) ports, IEEE 1394 ports, and parallel data ports.

1 4. A system according to claim 2, wherein the computer
2 includes software, coupled to receive the control request signal provided by the
3 control output port of the input select switch, which implements a priority
4 scheme that determines which of the first ones of the operational commands and
5 the second ones of the operational commands are selected by the input select
6 switch responsive to the select signal.

1 5. A system according to claim 1, wherein:

2 the remote control transmitter includes a further computer
3 keyboard and an infrared transmitter; and

4 the remote control receiver includes an infrared receiver.

1 6. A system according to claim 1, wherein:

2 the remote control transmitter includes a plurality of direction
3 switches which provide direction signals and an infrared transmitter that
4 transmits the direction signals; and

5 the remote control receiver includes an infrared receiver and
6 circuitry which converts the direction signals into signals compatible with a
7 computer pointer device.

1 7. A system according to claim 1, further comprising:

2 an alternate video source which provides further video information;

3 a video switch, responsive to a video source control signal to
4 provide either the video information from the computer or the further video
5 information from the alternate video source to the television monitor;

6 wherein, the input select switch includes circuitry, responsive to a
7 video source selection signal provided by the remote control receiver for
8 generating the video source control signal.

1 8. A system according to claim 7, wherein the alternate video
2 source is coupled to the computer to provide at least audio signals to the
3 computer and the computer is configured to provide the audio signals to audio
4 processing circuitry at the first location.

1 9. A system according to claim 7, wherein the alternate video
2 source is configured to provide audio signals to the video switch and the video
3 switch is responsive to the video source control signal to provide the audio
4 signals to audio processing circuitry at the first location.

1 10. A system according to claim 7, wherein:

2 the alternate video source includes a plurality of video sources;

3 the circuitry in the input select switch sends data to the computer

4 requesting the one of the plurality of video sources in response to a request from

5 the remote control receiver for the one of the plurality of video sources; and

6 the alternate video source is responsive to a control signal from the

7 computer to select one of the plurality of video sources to provide the further

8 video information to the video switch.

1 11. A system according to claim 7, wherein the video switch

2 includes a format converter that converts the video signals provided by the

3 computer and by the alternate video source into a format compatible with the

4 television monitor.

1 12. A method for controlling a computer at a second location

2 from one of an remote-control transmitter at first location and a keyboard at the

3 second location, the computer having a data input port and a control input/output

4 (I/O) port comprising the steps of:

5 receiving a command from the remote control transmitter;

6 generating a control request signal, responsive to the received

7 command, and sending the control request to the computer via the control I/O

8 port;

9 receiving a select signal from the computer via the control I/O

10 port; and

11 directing data signals from one of the remote control transmitter

12 and the keyboard to the data input port of the computer, responsive to the

13 received select signal.

1 13. A method according to claim 12, further including the step
2 of prioritizing the control request signal with input signals received by the
3 computer from the keyboard to generate the select signal.

1 14. A method according to claim 12, wherein the prioritizing
2 step generates the select signal only when the computer has not received signals
3 from the keyboard for a predetermined interval.

1 15. A system for providing audio and video signals from a
2 second location to a first location and for controlling the audio and video signals
3 from the first location, comprising

4 a computer, in the second location, coupled for controllably
5 providing video, and audio output signals;

6 a television monitor, in the first location, coupled to the computer
7 for selectively displaying the video output signals provided thereby;

8 a local keyboard, in the second location;

9 a remote control transmitter in the first location for communicating
10 command and control signals;

11 a remote control receiver, in the first location, for receiving and
12 decoding transmissions from the remote control transmitter; and

13 an input select switch, in the second location, having a first and
14 second input port and a first and second output port, the first input port being
15 coupled to the remote control receiver and the second input port being coupled to
16 the local keyboard wherein the first output port and the second output port are
17 coupled to the computer;

18 an alternate video source, in the second location, coupled to the
19 computer for receiving a selection signal from the computer; and

20 a video switch matrix, in the second location, having first second
21 input ports, an output port and an enable port wherein the first input port is
22 coupled to the computer for receiving a computer video signal, and the second
23 input port is coupled to the alternate video source for receiving the alternate
24 video source video signal and the enable port is coupled to the input select switch
25 to selectively couple the video signal applied to the first input port or the video
26 signal applied to the second input port to the output port.

1 16. The device of claim 15 wherein the plurality of video
2 sources includes at least two of a DVD player, a video tuner output, a HDTV,
3 and a video capture device.